Boston, May 12. 1861.

Dear friend Webb;

I wrote to you 7 or 8 days since, in relation to yr. inquiries for material for a new Life of John Brown, - sending you some contributions from Mrs. Lydia Maria Child, - & expressing intention of sending a parcel to you in course of a week. But the parcel has not gone, nor have I been able to send it. Redpath, who has a large parcel of letters of J. B.'s, has been absent from the city - has just returned, as I hear, tho' I haven't yet been able to find him. Phillips, who has read those letters, thinks there is little or nothing in them, which would afford you much aid in any brief or abridged biography. He describes them as strictly *business* letters, written home to give directions for managing the farm, &c. in his absence, or to report his purchases of wool; amidst such things will be occasionally dropped in a remark or reflection of value as illustrating his character. - John Brown once went to Europe, chiefly I believe to get information about Wool. Amongst his letters Phillips found one dated Paris. It begins, "My dear Wife, This is a wonderful city." That is *positively every word* he says about Paris, but immediately goes on to his plans of business. P. asked Mrs. B. "Is this Paris, in *France*, from which this letter comes?" "Yes" she said. "And did he say no more about the city?" "No - that is all." - Unpromising therefore as these letters may be, as to any extent of helpful material for you, I still propose to examine them, if

I can get hold of them, and to send you any excerpts which may appear worth it. Before I must close this letter, I think I shall be able to tell you definitely whether I am to have them or not.— By the Steamship which sails hence next Wednesday, for Liverpool, I shall send you the 2d vol. of Redpath, "Echoes of Harper's Ferry", with an additional book or two;— I think you may like to see the new volume issued by our "Southside" Adams, D.D.— called "The Sable Cloud", and I shall send it. I have also some more papers for making up your file, which I may send thus. I shall direct the parcel to S. R. Graves's Care, Baltic Building,— and I hope you will get it without much loss of time.— I am also hoping to send you, herein, some authentic information as to the circumstances of the Brown family, and the amount of aid which has been rendered them. I have taken pains to get it, and confidently look for it tomorrow.—

I have never had a word of reply to 3 letters, written to various points, about Thomas Sparrow. Do you wish me to resort to advertising?

The times here are already affecting, and we think will increasingly affect, our Society's receipts. Business of all kinds is quite at a stand-still, except in what relates to military movements and supplies for the troops. It is extraordinary with what a facility & readiness the Northern States have turned from all accustomed avocations to the new & wholly untried business of war. It affects all classes. Students of Harvard College drill, in divisions, systematically, & do guard duty over State Military property. Ministers pray the Lord to "teach their fingers to fight," &c. &c.

[Private.]

Among the necessary steps which our Exec. Committee have taken,— and feel themselves obliged to take,— in order to retrench expenses, is to discontinue their payments to Geo. Thompson at the year's expiration, which will be July 1st. But, loth to cut off this supply from him absolutely, they will propose to him an arrangement of this sort, to which also we feel obliged to ask you (or some other friend in England) to be a party, ~~[illegible]~~, if you can, and if you are willing,— vizt. That G. T., continuing to be an Agent of the Amn. A. S. Socy, shall, in the Socy's name, ask contributions in its behalf,— all such contributions to be sent to you, as the representative of the Socy's operations; that, out of such collections, you shall be authorized to pay Mr. Thompson a sum not exceeding £100. stg. per annum,— year to commence July 1. 1861,— any surplus to be remitted to us.— Garrison will write to G. T., and inform him of this arrangement, (which is an absolutely necessary measure, I must repeat, for we very reluctantly decided upon it,) and perhaps he (G. T.) will communicate with you. At all events, we thought it only right that you shd. be promptly informed of the arrangement, & your consent obtained to acting, as above,— if you see fit to give it. I mentioned to the Comtee that I hardly felt willing to ask of you this additional labour; knowing how much time you now give the Cause as Correspondent, Financial Agent, Distributor of Publications, & Editor; and also how much your own private business rests on your own shoulders just now. The Comtee therefore say they will not *ask* you to do this, but will only name the matter to you, for your own action — very glad to have your help in this thing, if you can give it; — if not, we will apply to some other friend, and have thought of Andrew Paton of Glasgow. Now will you have the kindness, & entire candour, to tell us what you prefer to have done in the case? and we will abide your decision. Your readiness to help us and the Cause is beyond all possibility of question, and your generous & indispensable aid is highly prized by the whole Com^{tee}. *We would not lay on you any unreasonable or too great burden*; and we wish to have *your* estimate, on that point, decide the question. You will observe that we do not propose to have you write a letter, or say one word, towards the obtaining of this money for G. T. *He himself is to be entirely charged with that.* *You*, (or whoever acts) are only *to receive* what may be sent to you, at G. T.'s instance, in behalf of the Society, and *to pay to him*, as above indicated, that which he is to receive; and if his collections are *less* than £100., he will receive so much less, for the Com^{tee} cannot agree to make it up to him out of other funds which, in other ways, may come into y hand. — Let me hear from you (at Leicester) as soon as convenient on this subject.

Ms.B.1.6.v.8, p.57